IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-7 (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A method of preparing the ceramic honeycomb structural body, ~~comprising:~~ comprising lattice walls formed by a large number of cells which are channels for fluid; and the peripheral wall which covers the circumference of said lattice walls, the outer peripheral portion of said lattice walls at least located in the vicinity of said peripheral wall containing the portion of a smaller porosity denser than that of the inner peripheral portion of said lattice walls which are located inside said outer peripheral portion, characterized in that a melting-point lowering component, which lowers a melting point of a material constituting said ceramic honeycomb structural body, is applied on at least the outer peripheral portion of said lattice walls of said body, and then the resulting body is heat-treated to form said denser portion.

9. (original) The method of preparing the ceramic honeycomb structural body, as claimed in claim 8, wherein the content of alkali metals and alkaline earth metals in said melting-point lowering component is less than 0.5%.

10. (currently amended) The method of preparing the ceramic honeycomb structural body, as claimed in claim 8 ~~or 9~~, wherein said melting-point lower component is applied on the outer peripheral portion of said lattice walls in a manner in which the applying amount gradually increases from the inside to the outside.

Claim 11 (canceled).

12. (currently amended) A method, for preparing a ceramic honeycomb structural catalyst, ~~wherein~~ comprising supporting a catalyst component ~~is supported~~ on ~~the~~ a ceramic honeycomb structural body~~, as claimed in any one of claims 1-7~~ comprising: